

Ruby Bay  
Pilot

By

Tony Campbell

EXT.BEACH - DAY

Huge black clouds gather in the sky above the beach.

Through the gloomy half light the shape of a RUINED TOWER.

Waves crashing against the base of a LIGHTHOUSE.

A CAVE.

The entrance is littered with beer cans and cigarette packets.

A SEAGULL flies towards the outline of a small ISLAND with steep cliffs.

On top of the cliffs stands the ruins of an old ABBEY.

The seagull as it circles the abbey before it comes to roost in an arch where a window had once been.

EXT.GARDEN - DAY

A path bordered with well kept flower beds, bird tables, water features, and gnomes lead to an ornate metal gate.

*RUBY BAY COTTAGE*

There's a hole beneath the name...something is missing....

INT.COTTAGE - DAY

Dusty shelves filled with bric-a-brac and well read books.

Black and white photographs of fishing boats and fishermen, old pubs and men and women in hats and bonnets.

A copy of FOLK TALES OF ANCIENT FIFE sits next to an empty, worn armchair.

INT.SWIMMING POOL - DAY

A school swimming lesson.

TWENTY CHILDREN, all about ten years old stand on the edge waiting to jump in.

LIAM, skinny in over-sized shorts, hops from foot to foot. Tears forming in the corner of his deep, dark eyes.

The other kids jump in and begin splashing around.

(CONTINUED)

LAUGHTER echoes around the pool.

Liam clenches his fists, closes his eyes and wishes he could be somewhere else.

TWO BOYS look up at Liam. They start a chant.

BOYS

Liam! Liam! Liam!

The chant is taken up by most of the kids in the pool and continues until the LIFEGUARD blows her WHISTLE.

The kids swim to the side of the pool.

Liam has gone.

INT.BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liam is engrossed in a book. Not the kind of book a normal kid would read. It has a worn and dusty cover.

The kind of book found in backstreet second hand shops.

The title is just visible:

*SERPENTS AND SAILORS - MYTHOLOGY OF THE SEA*

Liam drops the book as a piercing SCREECH shatters the silence.

It's Liam's MUM....

MUM

Put those books down and come here!

Liam carefully picks up his book and gently places it on his shelf.

He trudges out of his room and down the stairs into the

KITCHEN

His MUM is standing with her hands on her hips. She's early 40's, dressed like a teenager.

MUM

You're going to your Gran's.

Liam shrugs his shoulders.

MUM

Me and your dad need a break.

Liam shrugs again.

MUM

And you with all your reading and never leaving the house. We never get any peace.

Liam just stares blankly.

MUM

So pack your bag, your grandad is on his way.

LIAM

What about school?

MUM

School? You've only got 2 days left anyway. Then it's your holidays. You can spend the summer there.

Liam has been holding it together - until now.

A tear appears in his eye...

MUM

Don't even think about crying. You had better toughen up before you come back. If you come back.

INT.CAR - DAY

GRANDAD, dressed in tracksuit and baseball cap, has his foot down.

Liam looks worried.

GRANDAD

Y'know the Largo Law story don't you?

Liam is too queasy to speak.

He nods.

Grandad's telling the story anyway...

(CONTINUED)

GRANDAD

Y'know, there's so much gold in that hill they say it turned the sheep yellow. That's why no sheep graze there now.

Liam stares blankly.

GRANDAD

You don't believe that do you? I thought you liked all those all stories.

Liam looks green. He takes deep breaths.

GRANDAD

They're more than just stories you know.

Grandad puts his foot flat down. as the car races along country roads.

Liam watches as the scenery flies past in a blur.

EXT.COTTAGE - DAY

Grandad hops out of the car and heads through the gate.

He leaves Liam to get his bags out.

As Liam struggles towards the garden gate he notices the sign saying "Ruby Bay Cottage".

He stops and stares for a moment.

Grandad fumbles for the right key.

LIAM

Where's the ruby?

Grandad tenses.

He drops the keys.

Grandad opens the door and ushers Liam into the

HALLWAY.

GRANDAD

Usual room son. Your gran made up the bed.

(CONTINUED)

Liam bashes the walls with his suitcases as he struggles through the door.

GRANDAD

Take your time to settle in.  
There's no rush to come back down.

INT.BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liam engrossed in building a model of a boat.

Grandad stands in the doorway for a moment and watches.

GRANDAD

I'll get the paint in from the  
garage in the morning.

Liam is too busy holding bits of model boat together to notice.

Grandad sits down on the bed and tries to stop himself from interfering.

LIAM

Where has the ruby gone?

Grandad stands up and begins sorting piece of the model.

GRANDAD

It's just gone missing. That's all  
you need to know.

LIAM

Is that why Gran's in hospital  
again?

Grandad takes the glue and begins sticking bits of model boat together.

LIAM

Will she be ok?

GRANDAD

It's just your Gran. You know what  
she's like.

INT.KITCHEN - DAY

Grandad prepares a huge breakfast.

Liam wanders in and grabs a banana.

GRANDAD

You're gonna' need more than that son.

Liam looks at the mountain of eggs, bacon and sausages.

He takes a bite of the banana.

LIAM

Was it the same kids as last time?

Grandad cracks another egg.

GRANDAD

Don't worry about it. It's fine.

LIAM

You never told me how you got it back last time.

Grandad dances around as fat splashes from the frying pan.

GRANDAD

It's not for you to worry about.

Liam finishes his banana and picks up a sausage.

GRANDAD

You do know that your Gran is nuts?

Liam opens the cupboards looking for more food.

GRANDAD

She thinks that ruby kept us safe.

Liam spreads a lump of butter on a piece of toast.

LIAM

And did it?

Grandad opens the fridge and rummages around. Liam waits patiently for an answer.

GRANDAD

You do want eggs don't you?

(CONTINUED)

LIAM

Is that ok?

Grandad cracks an egg into the frying pan.

GRANDAD

She's not been well for a while. She's been saying strange things.

Liam chews a piece of toast and avoids eye contact with Grandad.

The egg begins to smoke and splatter.

Liam jumps over to the cooker to turn it down.

INT.COTTAGE - NIGHT

A shaft of sunlight beams down on a pile of dusty old books next to the bed.

Liam lies on his bed on his stomach, completely embroiled in one. He has no idea he is being watched.

Grandad stands in the doorway. He shakes his head as he watches Liam.

GRANDAD

You need to get out.

Liam jumps up. He slams the book shut.

GRANDAD

A boy your age should be out down the beach. Playing cricket or talking to girls.

Liam tries to disguise his embarrassment.

LIAM

I just want to read for a while.

GRANDAD

When I was your age, I was never in. As soon as sun came up I was out. Didn't come back until the sun went down.

Liam starts to put the books back on the shelves.

(CONTINUED)



GRANDAD  
Mind you put them back right now.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grandad finishes packing a rucksack for Liam.

GRANDAD  
Now that should keep you going for  
the day.

Liam produces a book from behind his back.

LIAM  
Can I take it? I might get bored.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Groups of KIDS having fun on the beach. Some are sailing,  
others windsurfing.

Some just hanging out around fires.

Liam looks on from a distance. He tries to read but is  
distracted by the noise and the activity of the kids.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Liam down on his knees at a ROCK POOL. He pokes, lifting  
stones and watching tiny crabs scurry through the water.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Liam on his hands and knees combing carefully through the  
sand.

A group of COOL KIDS approach.

KID 1  
You looking for treasure?

Liam ignores them and continues digging.

They walk away sniggering.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Liam poking around in a rock pool again. He tries to turn over a large stone.

He tries to roll it over with his foot. It doesn't budge.

He bends down and tries to move it with one hand. It's not moving.

He gets down on his hands and knees. He grabs it with both hands. It moves slightly. He digs his hands into the sand beneath the rock. Slowly it tips back. Liam pushes it right over and the rock falls back with a splash.

The splash muddies the water. As the sand swirls around the pool Liam looks up at the sky.

Storm clouds have come from nowhere.

The cool kids run for shelter.

Liam looks back to the pool.

The water has cleared. Liam's eyes widen as he gazes down at a HUGE RED RUDY.

Liam plunges his hand back into the water and digs frantically.

He pulls it out.

As it pops out the massive black clouds open up.

Torrential rain pours down onto the beach.

Liam runs to the corner of the beach for shelter.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Liam watches the rain fall into the sea.

This is more than just a shower.

Liam reaches into his pocket and feels for the ruby.

As he pulls the ruby from his pocket

BANG

The floor opens up.

Liam falls through.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Fingers stretch out.

Then an arm.

Elbows bend.

Slowly and carefully Liam begins to pull himself up from the ground.

He brushes himself down as he struggles to understand what has happened.

He remembers. He reaches for the ruby. It's gone.

Although Liam has spent most of his nine years worrying about something or other, this is different.

He's scared. Too scared to move. He glances around.

He sees flames dotted along the walls of the tunnel.

Liam knows he must move - but has no idea which way.

His mind is made up when he hears rough whispers.

Liam's legs spring to life and he darts the opposite way.

He runs in short sprints. Stopping at each flame to check for the whispers.

Although tired and a little sore, he gets an energy boost when he spots the light at the end of the tunnel.

He pushes himself the final twenty yards out into the light.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Blinding light.

Liam collapses onto the sand.

Out of breath, he rubs his eyes.

Once he has focused he looks along the beach and up towards the town.

It's gone.

There are buildings. Some recognisable from earlier.

But it's changed. Dramatically.

(CONTINUED)

Confused, Liam's eyes dart across the beach.

The sailing boats and windsurf boards have gone - replaced by FISHING BOATS.

Utterly disorientated, Liam wanders across the beach in the direction of the town.

His focus returning, he looks up to where his Gran's house should be.

It's gone.

He pauses.

He turns around and heads for the ruined tower.

The tower is no longer ruined.

It stands proud and pristine. Metal grids cover the windows.

Liam notices smoke coming from the top of the tower.

EXT. TOWER - DAY

Liam shuffles towards the tower.

He stops dead as he hears

A BELL RINGING.

A well dressed young man, TOM appears in the tower doorway.

Tom strides out from the tower, he rings the handheld bell dramatically and aggressively as he strides towards Liam.

Liam is too tired and too bewildered to run.

He freezes as Tom approaches him. He continues ringing the bell. Tom's face becomes more threatening as he enters Liam's personal space.

He holds the bell up and rings it right in front of Liam's face.

Liam stands firm, not through bravery but because he has nowhere to run.

Tom is obviously not used to this kind of reaction. He gazes into Liam's eyes.

Liam is not intimidated. He stares back.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I don't know who you are. But you really should be on your way.

LIAM

Should I?

It's Tom who is looking worried now. His plan A has failed and he doesn't have a plan B. He looks back towards the tower.

TOM

She'll be out imminently. She will not be pleased. You do know that?

Liam looks over Tom's shoulder to the tower. He's just thinking that it looks a good place to get some sleep.

LIAM

She? She who?

TOM

Lady Anstruther. This is her bathing time. If she she's you she will have you hung.

Now Liam looks worried.

LIAM

Hung?

TOM

By the neck. You'll be buried before the next sunrise.

Tom begins to realise that Liam is no threat. He retreats from Liam's space just as

LADY ANSTRUTHER appears: striking, head of flaming orange hair and a swimsuit that leaves everything to the imagination - even arms and legs.

She strides purposefully over and immediately dominates the conversation.

LADY ANSTRUTHER

Hung? Oh no, I won't have him hung. Drowning is my thing now. I'll have him tossed to the fish and the gulls.

LIAM

But your high...your hon...Mrs...I  
don't understand...I'm just...I'm  
lost...

Lady Anstruther looks him up and down.

She glances at Tom.

LADY ANSTRUTHER

He's lost.

Liam's well rehearsed puppy-dog expression routine kicks in.

He lowers his head and raises his eyes...

LADY ANSTRUTHER

Well you do look  
rather...strange. Where have you  
come from?

Liam looks towards his Grandparent's house should be. He  
hears how stupid that would sound...

LADY ANSTRUTHER

What are you? A stowaway? A  
ragamuffin? A rascalion?

Liam looks at her with pleading eyes.

LIAM

I'm just lost.

Lady Anstruther reaches out to Liam. She ruffles his hair  
gently.

LADY ANSTRUTHER

I won't have you killed. You can  
stay. Do you want to stay child?

Liam shakes his head.

LIAM

I just want to go home.

Liam turns and walks away from the tower in silence.

EXT.BEACH - DAY

Liam trudges across the sand. He gazes up at the town and  
watches as FISHERMEN in the distance go about their  
business.

(CONTINUED)

He looks out sea and watches as the sun slips below the horizon.

Liam climbs into a battered old rowing boat and snuggles up into a ball. He collapses. Exhausted.

EXT.BEACH - DAY

The sun already high in the sky. Voices of people and squawking of seagulls fill the air.

Liam rubs his eyes.

A figure standing over him.

He rubs his eyes again.

Two figures.

He rubs his eyes frantically and then widens them, struggling to focus.

Three figures. They are becoming clearer. Long blonde hair. Curves.

Relief evident on his face, Liam pulls himself upright.

Only to see that these three women all have

Handlebar moustaches.

A look of shock on Liam's face. He mouth gapes open.

These women are known as the TACHE HAGS.

TACHE HAG 1

Child. Are you the stranger that we await?

Liam spellbound by their facial hair.

TACHE HAG 2

The boy is no use to us. Look at him. He's as scared as a starfish. Look at that mouth.

Liam closes his mouth.

TACHE HAG 3

Let's just steal what he's got.

Liam begins to wake up.

(CONTINUED)

TACHE HAG 1  
Have you been sent to take us  
back? We've waited a century for  
this. Is it really you?

LIAM  
I'm sorry...

TACHE HAG 2  
The boy's just a stowaway. Look at  
his clothes. Poor mite.

LIAM  
I'm just...

TACHE HAG 3  
Well child. What do you have for  
us? If you don't have the ruby  
what do you have?

Liam suddenly pricks up.

LIAM  
Ruby?

Liam climbs from the boat and brushes himself down.

The Tache Hags exchange glances.

TACHE HAG 1  
You have been sent!

LIAM  
No, no. It's just that..

TACHE HAG 2  
Just hand it over.

Tache Hag 3 grabs Liam. Liam just stands still and puts his  
hands in the air.

TACHE HAG 3  
Check the boat!

Liam stands calmly as Tache Hag 2 frisks him.

She doesn't find anything and steps back.

TACHE HAG 3  
Where is it? Where've you hidden  
it?

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS circle over head.



LIAM  
I don't know about a ruby. I'm  
just lost. I just want to go home.

The Tache Hag's attitude softens.

TACHE HAG 1  
We can't help. If you need help  
you need to out there.

She points enigmatically out to sea.

TACHE HAG 2  
The Abbey on the island. You need  
to see the witch.

LIAM  
Witch?

TACHE HAG 3  
If you're too scared you can stay  
here.

LIAM  
I'm not scared.

TACHE HAG 1  
In that case, you could be out  
there before noon.

TACHE HAG 3  
You might not be back though.

Liam looks out to the outline of the Abbey standing on the  
island.

TACHE HAG 2  
Leave him. He's useless.

Liam has made his mind up.

LIAM  
I'm going.

Liam grabs the boat and begins to try to pull it into the  
sea. The boat doesn't move.

The Tache Hags watch him for a moment.

Liam fails to budge the boat. The Tache Hags grab the rope  
and pull it easily into the sea.

Liam smiles his thanks.

TACHE HAG 1

Good luck.

Liam hops into the boat and wobbles as he tries to sit down.

TACHE HAG 2

Whatever you do. Don't scream.

Liam grabs one oar and pushes the boat out to sea.

He picks up the other and tries to row. Liam gets frustrated as the boat spins in circles.

A seagull lands on the boat.

Eventually Liam lines up the oars and the boat heads through the waves towards the Abbey.

EXT.SEA - DAY

Liam, tired, miserable and sore. His blistered hands find it impossible to grip the oars.

The boat bobs around aimlessly. Something catches Liam's eye. A shadow underwater.

He watches and waits.

Nothing.

He notices bubbles in the water.

BANG

The boat shakes as it is rammed from beneath.

Liam loses his grip on the oars completely. They slip into the sea.

Liam looks around, waiting for the next attack. Silence.

SQUAWKING of seagulls above distracts him for a moment.

BANG

The boat is rammed again. The damage is done this time.

A crack in the boat begins to let water in.

BANG

This time the boat splits.

(CONTINUED)

Liam looks to the island. He's only 100 metres from safety. Seals and seabirds watch Liam from the rocks.

The boat is going down. Liam watches the shadow circle around beneath the waves.

The flock of seagulls above has grown to hundreds.

Liam shivers as he slips into the water.

Suddenly the 100 metres looks like 100 miles.

Liam panics as his eyes frantically search for the shadows.

The seagulls swoop down over Liam. The shadow appears in the water. The seagulls swoop down and frighten the shadow away.

Liam manages to compose himself enough to begin swimming. His aching arms and legs struggle to cut through the swelling waves.

Liam reaches shallow water and drags himself to his feet. He stumbles through the water and onto the beach.

The seagulls circle overhead a couple of times before flying away.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Liam stares up an almost sheer cliff face to the Abbey at the top. He looks at the sea as the waves bring in the broken pieces of his boat. He looks over at the mainland. He has to do something.

Liam stands up. Dusts himself down and tries to get a grip on the cliff face.

He climbs a few feet with ease.

As he grabs at a rock, it slips. Liam takes a breath. He regains his composure and starts again.

A few more feet. His confidence growing.

He is brave enough to look down. He's not scared.

He looks up. He's halfway there.

All of a sudden he's like Spiderman.

He hauls himself to top. Stands up. Looks down. That's been some climb!

EXT. ABBEY - DAY

As Liam revels in his achievement of getting up the cliff a smile creeps onto his face. His brow furrows as he prepares himself for whatever is about to happen. He puffs up his chest and turns around to face the Abbey.

As he turns he is faced with...AGNES ADAM. Liam looks her up and down. He thinks he should be scared. He's not. She doesn't look like a witch. She looks just like a little old Granny. She smiles. A warm, welcoming smile.

Liam takes a step towards her.

AGNES  
No further child.

Liam freezes.

AGNES  
Who sent you here?

Liam attempts to move...

AGNES  
Halt child.

LIAM  
I don't...I'm not sure...I'm  
lost. Three women said...

AGNES  
Enough. I know who sent you. I  
know why you're here.

Agnes beckons him with a bony finger. On the finger is a bright red ruby ring.

Agnes smiles as she catches Liam looking at it.

AGNES  
Not the one you need child.

LIAM  
They said you'd help me.

AGNES  
They did?

LIAM  
They said the old witch would help.

Agnes smiles again. She watches as Liam squirms as he waits for her reply.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES

Oh. And you think I'm a witch?

LIAM

I don't...I'm not sure...They said to come to the island...

AGNES

Oh, they think I'm a witch. They treated me like a witch. The things they did to me.

LIAM

They?

AGNES

The people over there. The good people. You're just a child. You shouldn't know.

Agnes softens...

AGNES

Come with me child.

Liam follows her towards the Abbey.

AGNES

Are you one of the good people? Or are you a good person?

LIAM

I don't know. I'm not very good in school. My teacher said I was bad. My mum and dad said I was bad. I don't feel bad...

Agnes laughs.

AGNES

People? Don't listen to people. They're all stupid. All of them. They all follow each other and nobody has any thoughts of their own.

Liam follows Agnes into the Abbey

INT. ABBEY - DAY

The Abbey is a complete shell. Although the walls and windows are intact, there are absolutely no fittings. Just a small fire and a pile of rags.

Liam looks into the flames. Hypnotised for a second.

AGNES

You expected a cauldron, a pointy hat and a broomstick didn't you?

LIAM

Well...

AGNES

This way child.

Liam follows her into a tower. No stairs, no fittings. Just an empty tower.

AGNES

Is this what they told you about? Is it? The test? They told you about it child?

LIAM

They did say something. But they didn't...

AGNES

Quite simple child. You pass the test and I help. You don't and...

Agnes points at a SEAGULL perched on a window ledge. Liam takes a moment before he realises what she means.

AGNES

So? Are you brave enough child? Brave enough or desperate enough?

Liam strains his neck as he looks up to the top of the tower.

AGNES

Do you believe in magic child? Do you believe in special powers?

LIAM

I...I suppose I do. I think I have to. Don't I?

(CONTINUED)

AGNES

So do you believe I'm a witch?

The seagulls begin to SQUAWK. They take to the sky.

LIAM

I don't know.

AGNES

If you don't know, why are you here? You need a witch to help. Am I a witch or not?

Liam gulps. He's terrified of giving the wrong answer.

AGNES

Were the good people right to do what they did? Were the right to torture me and banish me to this island? Well?

LIAM

I hope you're a witch. I was told I need a witch to help me. If you are witch then you can help me. So, yes. I think you are. You're a witch.

Agnes smiles and raises her eyebrows.

AGNES

You're not as stupid as people say you are. Are you? People do call you stupid don't they? Back in your world. They make fun of you. You will get stronger. But before you do.

Agnes screws her face up. She stares at Liam. Her eyeballs bulge.

Liam is frozen. He can't even try to move.

AGNES

You were expecting spells and cauldrons. I don't work like that. Now, you will be able to speak in just a second. You can say yes or no. If you pass the test then I will help you. If you fail, then you are a coward and you can join them.

Agnes points at the flock of seagulls flying overhead.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES

So. Do you want to take the test?

LIAM

Yes.

Liam is immediately sent shooting upwards. He stops as he leaves the tower. His body is still frozen. Only his eyes move.

Liam looks out over the sea to the town and the beach on the mainland.

He cast his eyes down to see the figure of Agnes down below.

Liam drops like a stone.

He stops a foot from the ground. His expression has not changed.

AGNES

No screams? I'm surprised. Surprised but very impressed. Again?

LIAM

Yes.

He shoots upwards again.

The seagulls have gathered around the open top of the tower.

They circle Liam's head as he looks down at Agnes again.

He drops to the floor. Agnes keeps him hovering an inch off the ground. She looks him up and down.

AGNES

You're braver than you look boy.

Liam stretches his toes to try and get his feet back on the ground.

AGNES

I could tell you where the ruby is. If I was that kind of person. But I'm not, so I won't. I think you boy, I think you can do it without me. I like you. You're not like the rest. I think you can do anything you want.

Liam's feet land on the ground. He face is green. He gulps to stop himself from puking.

(CONTINUED)



AGNES

Off you go boy. Good luck.

Liam is still speechless. Too full of nausea to smile. He manages to raise a hand and turns and stumbles back towards the beach.

FADE OUT